

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 268

INFO SECDEF

USCINCSO

UNCLAS LIMA 4210

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, PE

SUBJECT: DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN PRESIDENT VELASCO AND  
NAVY MINISTER VARGAS CABALLERO

REF: LIMA A-114 AND LIMA 4211

1. AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY, PRESIDENT VELASCO WAS ASKED ABOUT RECENT POLITICAL STATEMENTS (REFAIR) BY NAVY MINISTER VARGAS CABALLERO. VELASCO RESPONDED THAT ONLY THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER HAD THE RIGHT TO MAKE POLITICAL STATEMENTS AND THAT IF OTHER MINISTERS MAKE SUCH STATEMENTS, THEY SHOULD RESIGN. AS A RESULT, THE NAVY ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE DEFENDING VARGAS AND HIS RIGHT TO MAKE POLITICAL STATEMENTS AS A MEMBER OF THE RULING JUNTA (ARMY, NAVY, AIR FORCE COMMANDERS). THE EMBASSY'S INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF THE OFFICIAL VERSION OF VELASCO'S WORDS AS PUBLISHED IN NUEVA CRONICA AS WELL AS THE NAVY'S COMMUNIQUE AS CARRIED IN LA PRENSA ARE REPORTED HERIN.

2. QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT, A FEW DAYS AGO, THE NAVY MINISTER, VICE-ADMIRAL VARGAS CABALLERO, SAID, ACCORDING TO EL COMERCIO, THAT ONE OF THE POSTULATES OF THE REVO-  
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LUTION IS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THAT EVERYONE WHO

DISAGREES WITH THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT BE CALLED COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY. IN THIS REGARD, EL COMERCIO PUBLISHED AN EDITORIAL WHICH HAS BEEN WIDELY COMMENTED UPON IN POLITICAL CIRCLES AND INTERPRETED AS ONE OF THE STRONGEST ATTACKS AGAINST THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT. WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ABOUT BOTH THE DECLARATIONS OF THE NAVY MINISTER AND THE EDITORIAL OF EL COMERCIO?

ANSWER: SINCE OCTOBER 3, 1968, THE GOVERNMENT HAS WELCOMED CRITICISM. AND SINCE THAT DATE, IT HAS ACCEPTED IT. SOME OF THE MISTAKES MADE BY THE PROCESS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED BECAUSE THEY WERE POINTED OUT OPPORTUNELY. BUT ONE SHOULD NOT CONFUSE THE RIGHT TO CRITICIZE, TO DISAGREE, A RIGHT WE ACKNOWLEDGE, AS ADMIRAL VARGAS CABALLERO SAID, WITH THE RIGHT TO MAKE COUNTER-REVOLUTION. I THINK THAT ONLY REVOLUTIONARIES AND COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES EXIST WHEN THERE IS A REVOLUTION. AND ALSO, A SMALL NUMBER OF UNDECIDED INDIVIDUALS, WHO DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH COURAGE TO JOIN ONE BAND OR THE OTHER. I AM NOT REFERRING TO WHAT THEY CALL DEMOCRATIC REGIMES BECAUSE THAT IS NOT PERU'S CASE. WE DID NOT ACHIEVE POWER THROUGH ELECTIONS. WE CAPTURED IT IN ORDER TO INITIATE A REVOLUTION, REFORM SOCIETY AND RETURN POWER TO THE PEOPLE, THE PEOPLE WHO WERE FORGOTTEN, EXPLOITED AND DESPOILED FOR MORE THAN 150 YEARS. IN ANY CASE, ADMIRAL VARGAS CABALLERO'S STATEMENTS REPRESENT A VERY PARTICULAR, PERSONAL POINT OF VIEW. IN THE GOVERNMENT THERE IS A UNITED TEAM, REAL CAMARADERIE. WE DISCUSS ALL DECISIONS WITHIN THE TEAM AND THEY ARE APPROVED BY A MAJORITY VOTE. WE KNOW THAT THERE ARE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY NEWSPAPERS WHO SEND THEIR REPORTERS PREPARED WITH DOUBLE-MEANING QUESTIONS, IN ORDER TO SPECULATE LATER POLITICALLY ABOUT THE RESPONSES. BECAUSE WE REALIZED THEIR GAME, WE DECIDED IN THE CABINET THAT STATEMENTS OF A POLITICAL NATURE, ABOUT THE THINKING OR COURSE OF THE PROCESS, WERE RESERVED FOR MYSELF (PRESIDENT VELASCO) AND THE PRIME MINISTER (GENERAL MERCADO). THE REST OF THE MINISTERS WERE AUTHORIZED TO SPEAK ABOUT MATTERS UNDER THEIR CHARGE AND ANYONE WHO VIOLATED THIS ACCORD SHOULD PRESENT HIS RESIGNATION (VELASCO ACTUALLY SAID THAT HE "WHO SOKE UNCLASSIFIED

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OF POLITICS"), IT IS AN AGREEMENT CONTAINED IN THE CABINET'S MINUTES.

QUESTIONS: MR. PRESIDENT, YOU HAVE JUST SAID THAT THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS SHOW THAT IT WAS AGREED THAT THE ONLY PERSON WHO COULD MAKE POLITICAL STATEMENTS WAS YOU...

THE PRESIDENT (INTERRRUPTING), I AND THE PRIME MINISTER, AND I ALSO SAID THAT EACH MINISTER COULD HANDLE QUESTIONS RELATING TO HIS PORTFOLIO. AND THAT, I REPEAT, TO AVOID ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS OF DOUBLE-MEANING, PREVIOUSLY PREPARED BY THE ENEMIES OF THE REVOLUTION.

QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT, YOU ALSO SAID THAT THE MINISTER WHO MAKES POLITICAL DECLARATIONS HAD THE OBLIGATION TO RESIGN.

ANSWER: YES, I SAID THAT.

3. ACCORDING TO LA PRENSA, THE FOLLOWING COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED BY THE NAVY EARLY THIS MORNING (MAY 30), OBVIOUSLY IN ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT VELASCO: MINISTRY OF THE NAVY, OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE NO. 48:

THE COUNCIL OF ADMIRALS INFORMS THAT THE PERUVIAN NAVY REITERATES ITS SUPPORT FOR THE PERUVIAN REVOLUTION. AT THE SAME TIME, IT REITERATES ITS UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FOR VICE ADMIRAL LUIS VARGAS CABALLERO, MINISTER AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE NAVY; AND WITH RESPECT TO THE NEWS CARRIED BY SOME OF THE COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA REFERRING TO THE AGREEMENT REACHED IN THE MINISTERIAL CABINET THAT THOSE MINISTERS WHO MAKE POLITICAL DECLARATIONS SHOULD RESIGN, THE COUNCIL OF ADMIRALS STATES THAT SAID AGREEMENT DOES NOT APPLY TO THE DECLARATIONS MADE BY THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE NAVY AND MINISTER OF NAVY AS A MEMBER OF THE JUNTA OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS CHARGED BY THE STATUTE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT WITH COMPLYING WITH AND REQUIRING COMPLIANCE WITH SAID STATUTE AND THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN.

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